

*Carmel, NY* – Congressman John Hall, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, issued the following statement in responding to former Wyoming Senator Alan Simpson and co-chairman of the President's bi-partisan deficit reduction commission comments about veterans and the deficit.

“This week Mr. Simpson blamed disabled Veterans for adding to our nation's budget deficit. His comments came just days after a Veterans Administration announcement that it is expanding eligibility for disability compensation to veterans suffering from three diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange, correcting a long running injustice.

This is a change I have long advocated for and strongly applaud. But Mr. Simpson, a veteran and former chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee said, 'The irony (is) that the veterans who saved this country are now, in a way, not helping us to save the country in this fiscal mess.'

I recognize the need to bring deficit spending under control but cutting funding for those that have helped to build and protect this nation and its ideals is unacceptable.

If he thinks the way to balance the budget is to cut health care benefits for disabled veterans whose diseases were caused by exposure to toxic chemical during service they were drafted into, then I call for President Obama to replace Mr. Simpson with someone better capable to serve him and the nation”